

Amendments to the Specification:

In the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following new paragraph [0005]:

Figures 1a-1e are diagrams illustrating an example of traffic flow in a Bi-Directional Line Switched Ring (BLSR) while there is and is not a failure in the ring. Figure 1a (Prior Art) is a diagram of exemplary traffic flow on a BLSR while there is not a failure. Although a BLSR has a working channel and a protection channel for traffic flowing East and West, only one working channel and its protection channel (which traverse the ring in the opposite direction) are shown in Figures 1a and 1b. In Figure 1a, ~~[[A]]~~ a stream of traffic 113 is received from a source external to the ring at node 101. Node 101 transmits this traffic 113 over its East span 115 on a working channel 119 to a node 103. Node 103 transmits the traffic 113 over its East span 117 in a working channel 121 to node 105. The stream of TDM traffic 113 exits the ring at node 105 to a destination external to the ring. Although extra traffic may be flowing in the protection channels of the ring, only the stream of TDM traffic 113 is shown for simplicity.

Please replace the abstract with the following new abstract:

A method and apparatus for a hybrid variable rate pipe is described. In one embodiment of the invention, a computer implemented method ~~comprises of~~ provisioning a non-BLSR protected layer 2/3 channel over a BLSR, provisioning a tunnel over the BLSR, and protecting the non-BLSR protected layer 2/3 channel between a first and second node of the BLSR with the tunnel is described.